

Appln No. 09/608,780
Amdt. Dated March 2, 2004
Response to Office action of January 9, 2004

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kent (EP 710005). Applicant respectfully disagrees. Kent teaches a method used in a laser printer of sampling the output of a laser beam array and modifying the outputs of individual lasers to produce a uniform beam intensity across the array. By contrast, the present invention claims detecting an underperforming location of an ink dot and modifying the output of adjacent locations to compensate for the underperforming location.

Applicant appreciates that this distinction is subtle, but nevertheless, Applicant submits that this distinction patentably distinguishes the present invention from the Kent citation. Kent takes a wholistic approach to providing a uniform intensity laser array for use in printing. The fundamental problem solved by Kent is that individual lasers can produce varying spot sizes for the same drive voltage. Kent teaches sampling the entire array of lasers and adjusting the drive voltages of each laser until a uniform intensity or spot size is achieved. That is, Kent teaches modifying all lasers simultaneously to achieve a constant output factor as demonstrated by the following section : *"Accordingly, this embodiment insures that the size of the spot produced by each of the activated lasers will be exactly the size of the spot requested or required by the image information, regardless of any physical or environmental differences between the lasers of the array"*

The paragraph following the paragraph quoted above in Kent teaches how different spot sizes can be created, but only in the context of adjusting the beam intensity of the lasers so that a uniform spot size is created. Kent does not teach adjusting the spot size of lasers adjacent to underperforming lasers in order to compensate for those underperforming lasers, as would be required in order to bring the disclosure of Kent within the scope of present claim 1. Nor does Kent teach any other method or apparatus, in any other type of printing apparatus other than a laser printer, for "adjusting the dot size of at least one dot at a location adjacent or near to the respective specific location from that required by the image data", which limitation is explicitly required by claim 1. Thus Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, and claims 2 to 6 by dependency on claim 1, are novel and inventive in light of the Kent citation.

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Claims 7-10 & 12 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kent. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 7 is an apparatus claim to a printer containing a similar limitation to claim 1 in that the printer includes means for compensating for an underperforming device by adjusting the dot size of one or more of the adjacent devices. Thus the comments provided above in respect of the method claims 1 to 6 equally apply in respect of the apparatus claims 7 to 10 and 12.

Claims 11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious, citing Kent as the primary reference. Applicant submits that the comments provided above in respect of Kent highlight that Kent fails to teach an essential feature of the claims on which claims 11 and 13 depend, and therefore that these claims are novel and inventive over the cited prior art, either in isolation or in combination.

Applicant respectfully submits that these comments are fully responsive to all the issues raised in the Official Action and that the Examiner's rejections are traversed by the comments made herein. Applicant therefore requests further consideration of this application.

Very respectfully,

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